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Theodore Presser

MOTTO:—*Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci.*—Horatius.
He who mingles the useful with the agreeable bears away the prize.

THE ETUDE

DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE TECHNICAL PART OF THE

Piano Forte.

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THEODORE PRESSER,

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THE ETUDE,

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THEODORE PRESSER,
LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA.

A FEW THOUGHTS FOR PIANO-FORTE TEACHERS.

II.

The whims of the pupils are a constant annoyance and hindrance to the teacher. They are a vexation that the teacher should not allow to grow; and, if quelled at the very start, much future trouble will be avoided. Generally the suggestions and notions of the pupils are a sign of discouragement and disgust, hence should be treated indirectly—to be considered but not followed. If a teacher caters and gives way to every caprice and that comes over a pupil, he will, in time, lose the respect of the pupil and finally all power over him. Heeding the desires of pupils is certain to make matters worse. A teacher should strive to be wholly and completely a teacher, and teach the scholar to be nothing more than one taught.

It is the teacher's place to choose the pieces to be studied, and to decide how long they should be continued. On the whole, it is safest to disregard the idle wishes and vain desires of the pupil. Practice alone will confirm this.

The method of teaching the piano-forte is yet vague and unsettled. There is no fixed standard of doing the every-day things in the art. Every one makes his own method or follows some one else, without being positive which is correct. One teaches that the fingers should be bent; another straight, and another to draw the fingers over the keys. Then again, one says to strike firmly; and leave the fingers down an instant after the next tone has been struck. We have those who teach that the stroke is to be made from the knuckle-joint only; others that it should be made from every joint of the finger. With the fingering of the scales, even the best authorities differ, and now some good teachers are advocating the playing of all scales with the fingering as employed in *C*. In octave playing there is much confusion and diversity; some want the loose wrist and stiff arm, like a child's whip, made by tying a string to a stick; others want a loose wrist and a yielding arm, as we find in a buggy whip with a yielding stock; others again, use the forearm, altogether, for octave playing. Plaidy used the loose wrist, Mocheles the stiff wrist method—both high authority. Some advocate memorizing pieces; others want the pupil's mind to be pinned down to the notes. Some use and others sneer at instruction books.

Endless individuality is shown on the subject of private and class teaching. and so it goes all through every department of piano teaching. In this confusion a teacher must have good judgment of his own, or he would not know which way to turn or what to do. It is surprising how little these points, so vital to correct piano playing and teaching, are discussed and treated by the general musical press.

The psychology, or nature of music, is a subject that is not irrelevant to teaching, and should constantly hover before the teacher's mind. He should ask himself these questions: What is music? Its nature? Its origin? Am I spending my life and energy in an art that has a reality, or is it only a hoax? What is the secret of this art we call music? Is it a medium to express some feeling or thought in us, or has it no foundation? Does music appeal only to the senses, or is it a language? An inquiry into the secrets of our art will make a teacher stronger; when he knows it is reality—that it is a living thing, it gives him a greater power to understand genius. This should form one of the most delightful studies of every teacher. It is, as yet, a rather unexplored region, which makes it doubly interesting.

The conduct, while at the piano, of many otherwise fine teachers and players, is not to be commended for grace and beauty of posture. A correct and graceful position at the piano enhances the attractiveness of the playing, as an awkward one mars the effect of the finest playing.

The *virtuosi* are not to be taken for models in this respect. Their playing often fails in making the impression it merits on account of the eccentricity of manners while performing, frequently rendering the whole performance ridiculous. An orator of corresponding fame to some of our great pianists, would imperil, or even ruin his fair name, in one evening, if guilty of the improprieties that can be witnessed at the public performance of many celebrated players.

Stage etiquette forms a part of the attraction of an eloquent speaker. Pulpit etiquette is indispensable to every preacher. In the drama it is of paramount importance. Dignified bearing and becoming manners form a principal feature in the appearance of every one who addresses a public audience. The public expect it in every one but a concert pianist! Why should he be exempt from public censure? It cannot be that the divine *inflatus*, when it descends on one, produces such a horrid, outward, grotesque performance; or that these oddities lend a mysterious charm to the playing. Why is it that in a public singer you do not find the same eccentricities? The prima donna has the same strain laid upon her feelings as the *vitruoso*, but she manifests no such extravagant gesticulations; and, likewise, there is no side-show among lady concert players.

We were seated once, awaiting the entrance of a new foreign traveling artist, whose appearance was expected to be met with a courteous appreciation of applause, but these kindly feelings were quickly dispelled when he came on the stage in a slow, swaggering gait, and lazily took his seat at the piano. He was by many mistaken for the janitor, who, it was thought, had come on the stage to regulate the footlights.

There have been numerous examples which demonstrate that grace and etiquette can be combined with virtuosity.

It is encouraging to notice that what has been done on this side of the Atlantic toward producing public players, has engrafted on it the idea of stage etiquette.

The dismal mimicry of a great *virtuoso* by some lesser lights is about as pitiful a sight as it is disgusting in principle. Be natural, and beware how you make a show of yourself before others, and cultivate a keen sense of proper deportment before public gaze.

GOTTSCHALK.

THE NOTES OF A PIANIST, by Gottschalk, is a fair sized volume containing the diary, biography, etc., of this pianist. The work is edited by his sisters and translated from the French by R. E. Peterson. The Notes treat of his experiences and observations during his professional travels through the United States, Europe, Mexico, Brazil, etc., and are of interest not only to the profession, but to the general reading public.

He has been supplanted by a new school of virtuosity, and his school is rapidly disappearing from the public mind; yet it cannot be denied that he did much of the pioneering work on which a great deal of the culture of our music now rests. He was the first American pianist who fairly achieved before the most cultivated and critical audiences of Europe a success, which entitles him to a high rank as an artist—exciting the greatest enthusiasm and eliciting the warmest praises from the most noted journals of music and from all cotemporary pianists. Particularly was he gratified by the cheering and hearty eulogiums of Chopin and Liszt, who hailed him as an equal, and admired him, not only for his original genius, but for his modest bearing and lovely character.

He was a born gentleman, and always had entry into the most highly cultured circles in this country, and in France particularly. His mother belonged to the French noblesse.

His severity and biting sarcasm and disrespectful allusions to the venerable John S. Dwight, then editor of *Dwight's Musical Journal*, had better been omitted when the book was printed. His education was systematically begun in the twelfth year of his age, in the French school, if he might be classed with any. His unique settings of negro melodies show the drift of his genius more, perhaps, than any his of works. His *banjo Bananier* and *Bamboula* waft over us those happy days in the far Sunny South before the war. He spoke and wrote French, Italian, German, Spanish and English; his linguistic proclivities were doubtless inherited from his father, who had great talent in that direction. Besides his attainments in languages he possessed an excellent classical education. He developed, early in his career, a noble and generous charity, giving a large proportion of the proceeds of his concerts to the poor and to charitable institutions. The reading of his diary will impress everyone with his unselfish and generous nature, as well as with his racy humor and large-hearted philanthropy. The book, aside from its musical interest, contains as many good points as any book of travels. The diction and translation of the work show a high degree of literary culture. The book is admirably suited for a relaxation from the severer studies of our calling.

Notes of a Pianist, by L. M. Gottschalk: J. B. Lippincott & Co., Philadelphia, Pa.

MUSIC TEACHERS' BUREAU OF EMPLOYMENT.

The department of THE ETUDE, which was announced in last issue, is now prepared for business. It is established to facilitate communication between music teachers and heads of institutions of learning, conservatories, societies, public schools, private families, etc., who have vacancies to be filled. The department is in charge of a thoroughly qualified person, but all decisions are made by the head of this office. It is hoped that the Bureau will prove mutually useful. We are placed in communication with over two thousand institutions where music teachers are employed and our advantage in supplying vacancies is at once apparent to all. For the benefit of those contemplating a change with the coming scholastic year, we will give, briefly, such information that may be desirable. The circulars and blanks, which will be sent to any address free of charge, give all needed information. The Bureau does not guarantee you a position. Your claims will be *faithfully* represented, and you will be nominated to all positions which you are qualified to fulfill. Much depends on yourself. After you have been introduced to heads of institutions in search of a teacher your success depends largely on the earnestness and vigor with which you present your claims. There will be a charge of two dollars as register fee, to cover expenses of correspondence, etc. If an engagement is made through this Bureau a commission of 5 per cent. is to be paid on the first year's salary only. A teacher has a better chance of procuring a position through us than by making personal application. Convince us of your efficiency and allow us as a second party to recommend you, which will come with more force and better grace. The Bureau is not alone for the benefit of instrumental teachers, but for all kinds of music teachers.

Our experience of twelve years as teacher in colleges acquaints us thoroughly with the responsibilities connected with such a position. If a teacher is competent and possesses the necessary collaterals, the chances are that a position will be offered. There is now a demand for good teachers.

We cordially invite all good teachers to a trial of this Bureau. There need not be the slightest delicacy in making application, for an office of this kind is considered the most business-like way in making your qualifications known. But for some such Bureau as this you might pass the rest of your existence amid uncongenial surroundings and in a sphere of petty usefulness.

M. G. De Camps, of Greenville, South Carolina, has built and opened a Conservatory of Music. This effort is not like a flame that looms up gloriously and then expires forever, but is the result of successive steps gained by work and merit. We predict a useful and successful career for this new-born institution in the South.

It is well to have it understood that THE ETUDE has no commercial consideration in recommending any work or music. It aims to help the teacher and not any publisher. All questionable advertisements are declined, and all irrelevant articles returned to the writers. It is with some feeling of satisfaction we state that the teachers all over this vast land of ours are beginning to waken up to the fact that THE ETUDE is their true friend. The most eminent teachers are sending in their subscription, with congratulatory letters. The press also sing praises to THE ETUDE in unmistakable terms. There are yet a number of new departments to be introduced, among which will be a graded course in harmony and piano. Our aim is to make a true and useful journal for every piano teacher.

A SPECIAL OFFER.

We will send to persons sending in their subscription before our next issue all the numbers of the incomplete Volume I., as a premium. Do not let this pass, but send postal note of $1.00 as soon as reading this. With every mail we receive requests for premiums made last November, which have long since been annulled. Remember this special offer continues till the appearance of the March issue.

WE have recieved a number of catalogues of standard and miscellaneous works on music and musical literature in the English language. Very few of these works are published in this country, but are imported from England. These catalogues will be sent on receipt of a two-cent stamp.

STORY, the sculptor, has forwarded from Rome to Mrs. George B. Loring, now in Washington, a beautiful cast in marble of the hand of Chopin, whose works, interpreted by Mrs. Loring, last winter, gave the sculptor great pleasure.

THE Wieck's Piano Studies, of which the specimen pages we publish in this issue, as a fair example, are without doubt the most practical, serviceable and easy studies published. They carry out faithfully the motto of this paper, in mingling the useful with the agreeable. We are glad to find so many teachers accepting our terms to supply them and adopting them into their classes.

THE musical excursion across the Continent, an advertisement of which appears in this issue, will interest all music people who have time, money, and inclination for such delightful pleasure. The chorus will be composed of 100 voices; concerts will be given on the route, and the singers will receive reimbursement from the net proceeds. The grandest scenery and sights in the world will be visited. The project is in good hands, and will, no doubt, prove an overwhelming success.

THE enterprising publishers, Geo. D. Newhall & Co., of Cincinnati, have just issued a collection of male quartettes, entitled *The Apollo Collection*, by Herman Auer. From an examination of the volume we find that it is chiefly arranged and compiled from the best compositions used at the *Lieder Tafel*, of Germany. The music is, therefore, not of that ephemeral nature that is soon caught up and soon forgotten, and which exhausts itself in a few years and must be replaced, but the melodies are abiding and enduring, and will, no doubt, be used by male choruses for time to come.

IN supplying a large number of THE ETUDE to one teacher by the year we make special rates, depending on the number taken. Write and we will quote our rates. All subscriptions must be paid in advance. Also, in ordering Urbach's Prize Method and Wieck's Piano Studies cash must accompany the order to receive attention. We keep no books, except the subscription book. Packages can, however, be sent C. O. D. The express charges from Lynchburg, north or south, are through rates. A package from Lynchburg to St. Paul, Minn., will be the same rates as from New York, or any other commercial center.

I know that you are possessed of a praiseworthy ambition to excel in your theoretical and practical knowledge of music. You have that indefatigable energy and perseverance which is the indispensable concomitant of either talent or genius. In short, you place implicit faith in hard work. But you have one great fault—you are too anxious, too eager to arrive at the end of your journey. You are impatient about results. You have a great desire to rapidly acquire knowledge—to take a great deal in at a glance. In the exuberance of your energy, you fume and fret, because you cannot demolish a great mountain by a single blow. You want to rush through your book, instead of wading slowly and minutely from beginning to end. This behavior of yours is directly opposed to the immutable rules laid down by nature. Study must be done in a tranquil, thorough, connected, unfretful manner. The natural law of continuity must be observed. You should learn one thing thoroughly before you undertake to learn the next higher thing in order. Believe me, whenever you attempt to hurry your studies, you are sure to retard them. All musical study, whether regularly or irregularly done, must conform to a certain system. Work steadily, and do not be forever on the lookout for brilliant results. These, if deserved, will arrive at the proper time; and if they are a long time coming, you will not fret impatiently, insomuch as you do not eagerly anticipate them. Even vocal or instrumental practice must be done in very slow time to secure thoroughness. Thousands ruin their musical prospects by practicing too fast, and therefore too superficially. If you shrink from tedious drudgery in music, there is little hope for you.

GEORGE T. BULLING.

The Wisdom of Many.

Lost time can never be found again.

A little knowledge is a dangerous thing.

It is better to retrace a wrong step than to pursue a wrong course.

The work that produces results nine-tenths must be drudgery.—*Bishop.*

To be angry with the weak is a proof that you are not very strong yourself.

Ideas are capital that bears interest only in the hands of talent.—*Revirol.*

One pound of learning requires ten pounds of common sense to apply it.—*Persian.*

With audacity, one can undertake anything, but one cannot accomplish everything.—*Napoleon I.*

Mankind, one day serene and free appears,
The next day they're cloudy, sullen and severe.
Of all bad things by which mankind are cursed,
Their own bad tempers surely are the worst!
—*Cumberland.*

A certain heroic, and, at the same, domineering egotism seems to lie in the nature of great, as occasionally in that of lesser geniuses.—*F. Hiller.*

The essence of the higher order of instrumental music especially, lies in the expression in tones of that which is inexpressible in words.—*Wagner.*

Art cannot be understood until much of life and nature is understood. The mastery of a single subject implies at least an appreciation of almost every other subject.

The older I become, so much the more clearly do I perceive how important it is, *first* to learn, and *then* to form opinions—not the latter before the former; also, not both at once.—*Mendelssohn.*

No man receives the true culture of a man in whom the sensibility to the beautiful is not cherished; and I know of no condition in life from which it should be excluded.—*Channing.*

The warm sunshine and the gentle zephyr may melt the glacier which has bid defiance to the howling tempest, so the voice of kindness will touch the heart which no severity could subdue.

The eye, when suitably supported, percieves stars where the naked eye sees only nebulous shadows. The like holds good of the ear in music, according as it is educated or unsupported by suitable training.

Music is the mediator between the spiritual and the sensual life. Although the spirit be not master of that which it creates through music, yet it is blessed in this creation, which, like every creation, is mightier than the artist.—*Beethoven.*

Were you to give me the best instrument in Europe, and, for auditors, people who either could not or would not understand anything, and who did not feel with me what I played, I should lose all pleasure in playing.—*Mozart.*

No man can give that which he has not. No epoch can produce that which it does not contain. Art is, always and everywhere, the secret confession, and, at the same time, the immortal movement of its time.—*Adolph Bern. Marx.*

Nothing is more nauseating than the contemplation of the hosts of professors of music, who, possessing little musical cultivation, and prevented by daily toils and fatigues from entering fairly into the spirit of the great masters, cause the immortal literature of music to serve as a milch cow from which to derive their daily sustenance.—*W. Von Lenz.*

There is far more that is positive in art, *i. e.* teachable and capable of being communicated, than there is generally believed to be, and the mechanical advantages by means of which the most spiritual effects may be produced are many. When these little devices of art are known, much of that which appears miraculous is merely play for the artists.—*Goethe.*

No form or habit is really useful to us until we can use it without thinking about it. The pianist cannot interpret music while he must think of the motion of his fingers. The singer cannot be free to feel or express the emotions of the words he sings if he must attend to notes, or tunes, or manner of singing; he must become familiar with the tune he uses if he would do more than merely sing the tune.

ONE HUNDRED APHORISMS.

SUGGESTIONS, DIRECTIONS, INCENTIVES, DEVELOPMENTS.

Being the Result of Thirty Years' Experience as Teacher of the Piano-Forte.

By J. C. ESCHMANN.

[Translated from the German by A. H. SNYDER.]

II.

Accentuation is likewise an important matter, since misconceptions and errors are liable to occur when the proper signs, in consequence of typographical errors, do not stand in the right places. In addition to this, the accentuation cannot always be indicated by signs, especially in the more delicate gradations. A few rules of general application may not be out of place:

1. The primary accent, as a rule, falls upon the first note of the measure.

2. A weaker, or secondary accent, should be placed on the first note of the second half of the measure.

3. In three-quarter time the primary accent is on the first quarter; in six-eighth time, upon the first and fourth eighth notes.

4. When several notes are written together thus:

the accent invariable belongs on the first one.

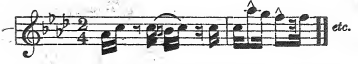
Of course these rules are to be modified in many instances; because if they should be too strenuously applied, and undue prominence given to the accented notes, the other extreme is soon reached, and the execution of a piece becomes as monotonous and mechanical as if no accent at all were employed.

Correct accentuation is, therefore, a point which must be impressed upon the pupil with the utmost accuracy and such delicate discrimination that he will, in no instance, be in doubt as to the position and degree of any accent that may be required.

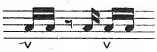
A few additional examples:

See Schumann's Carnival (Aveu).

a)



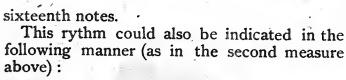
In this example a delicate accent must be placed upon the first of the two connected



sixteenth notes.

This rythm could also be indicated in the following manner (as in the second measure above):

b)

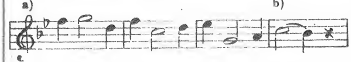


But the accent would then always fall upon the longer (eighth) note, as is likewise correctly indicated at *a* in the second measure, thus giving the whole passage a totally different meaning and character.

See Moscheles' Etudes, op. 70, in *E flat minor*.

This passage occurs:

a) b)

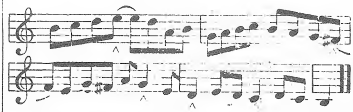


c

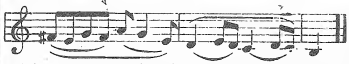
In this case, the accent must be placed unconditionally upon the half note, unless it is expressly indicated to the contrary by one of the usual signs. Here the primary accent does *not* fall upon the beginning of the measure, nor the secondary upon the beginning of its latter half.

At *b*, on the other hand, the accent belongs each time to the beginning of the measure, which is in this instance a half note; whilst the next note, of less value (a quarter), should be struck with considerably less force, as it has not even the secondary accent. The case is different in the following example, where not only one, but several shorter notes follow the longer one. The secondary accent is to be placed upon the first eighth note.

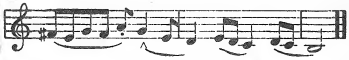
Where syncopation occurs, the longer note is accented, let its position be what it may, in the midst or at the end of a passage or measure.



Places like *a* may be marked in a different manner, but care should be taken not to raise the hand at each bar, thus making a break as if the breath were being taken—at all events not this way:

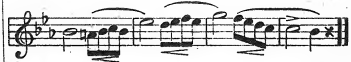


This would make the execution somewhat stiff and disconnected; but rather after this manner:



Likewise this motive from the overture to Freichütz, not so,—

But



The Peters' edition of Bach's piano compositions is worthy of special commendation with reference to this matter, for in it slurs appear only where they are really needed, and it is impossible to go wrong if the performer will raise the hand and make the necessary cæsura, so to speak, at the end of the slur.

The use of the slur is to some extent analogous to that of the comma in a sentence; and, in like manner, the pause corresponds to the period.

12. A piece may begin with a full measure, or with the unaccented beat. The first corresponds (in prosody) to the trochaic metre; the second, to the iambic. (— ⏑) (⏑ —)

13. It is very important that the pupil should be able, in every piece, to turn back and begin again from *any* point which the instructor may designate; but by all means do not allow him, in these repetitions, to begin only at such points as he may have previously selected and practiced. If he does this, there will at once develop evidences of a purely mechanical, thoughtless and superficial practice.

14. In playing duets, especially as an exercise in note reading, it will prove a relief to the instructor if he will accustom his pupil, in case a mistake is made, or a repetition becomes necessary, always to go back to the beginning of the same measure, or to one of those immediately preceding it. This is the simplest way of getting together again. Never let him begin in the middle or at the end of a measure; because, in that case, you have no means of knowing just where the repetition will begin.

15. Insist on the pupil's playing everything in an intelligent manner, and leaving nothing whatever to chance or hap-hazard. The beginning must be made with a thorough understanding; the fingers should not rest carelessly upon the keys, but each stroke must be made with a correct and intelligent fingering and proper movement of the joints.

16. A difficult passage should be practiced until the pupil is able to play it ten times in succession with absolute correctness. Only then may he feel confident that it is mastered; because such a passage may be played four or five times perfectly, with a re-appearance of the old mistake at the sixth trial, thus giving evidence that the passage is not yet mastered.

Pupils, as a general thing, are apt to think when they have gotten around such an obstacle safely one time, that the difficulty is over, and they then pass on. This is a delusion.

In the practice of a new piece much depends upon the manner in which it is played the first time—upon how the matter is taken in hand. In one instance, it will happen that the piece is played beautifully and with precision in a comparatively short time; while, on the other hand, as is very frequently the case, it is always played in a confused and clumsy style, which no subsequent practice is able to correct. This is the result of practicing too rapidly, where the main object is to get through with it as quickly as possible.

17. If the pupil is able to practice fifteen or twenty minutes a day, or even a half-hour, all of this will be needed for finger exercises and the usual daily studies. The time is entirely too short to think of attempting a piece. Difficult passages, however, may be selected as practice material.

18. Next to a thorough knowledge of time, it is perhaps most important that the pupil be made, from his first lesson, equally as familiar with the characteristics of the minor scales as with those of the major. He will not then experience the mortification, later on, of not being able to distinguish major from minor; and it will not happen that a minor composition will seem less beautiful to him than one written in major.

There are pupils who have done quite an amount of piano playing, evincing skill and aptness, and who can command right good attention, but who have never become familiar

Erster Abschnitt.

Die ersten Uebungen sollen auswendig gespielt und nach verschiedenen Tonarten transponirt werden.

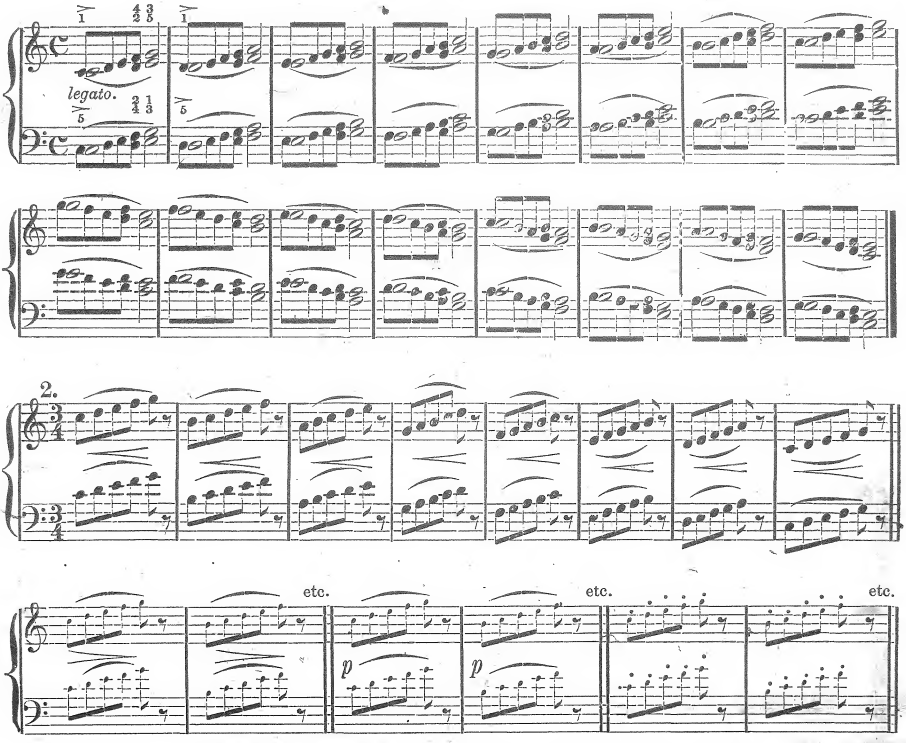
Section First.

The first exercises ought to be played by heart and transposed into various keys.

1.

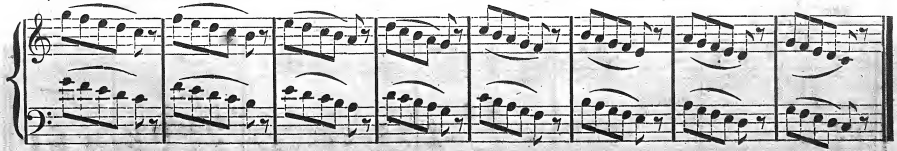
**Mit Hineinlegen in die Tasten zu spielen und zwar langsam.*

* To be played slowly and with "Hineinlegen" in the tones.



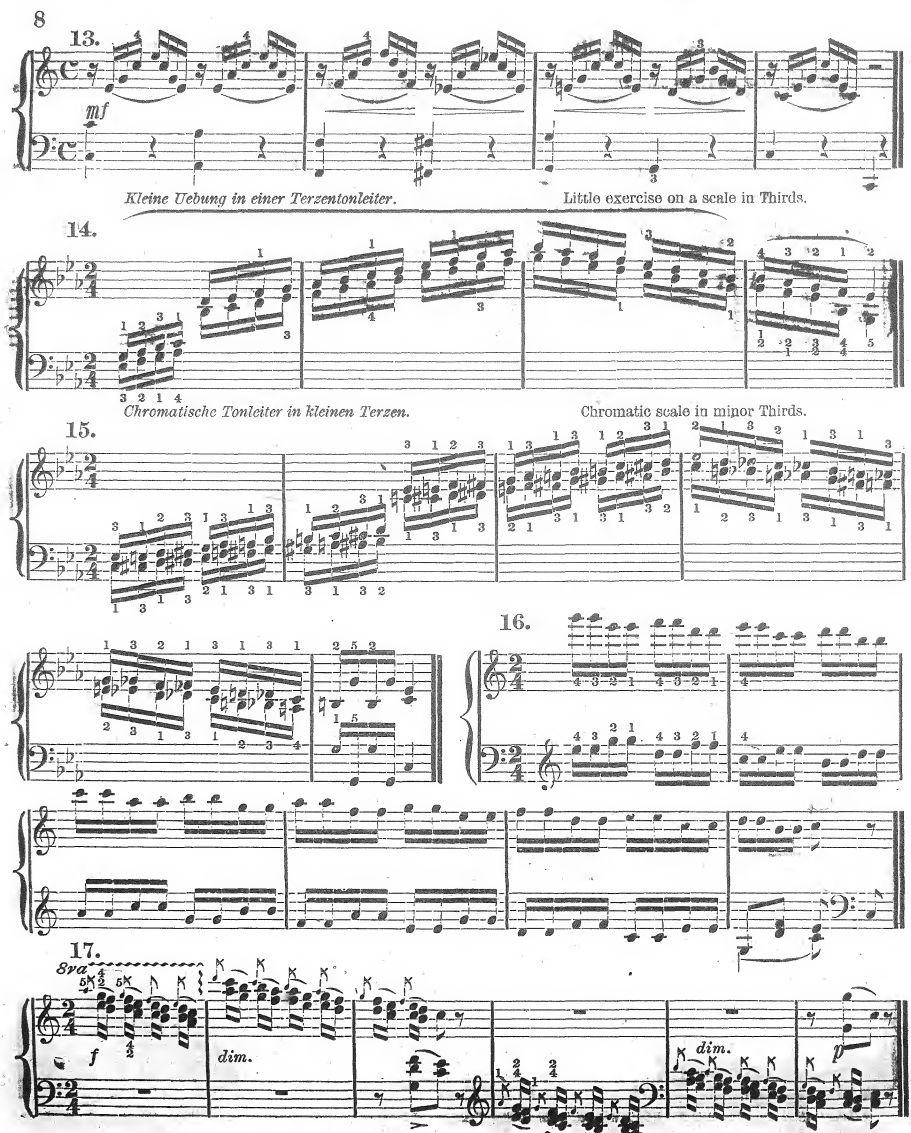
Mit denselben vorher angegebenen Nuancen zu spielen.

With the same attention to light and shade as the preceding.



**Unter "Hineinlegen" versteht Fr. Wieck: mit weicher und voller Tonausprägung spielen.*

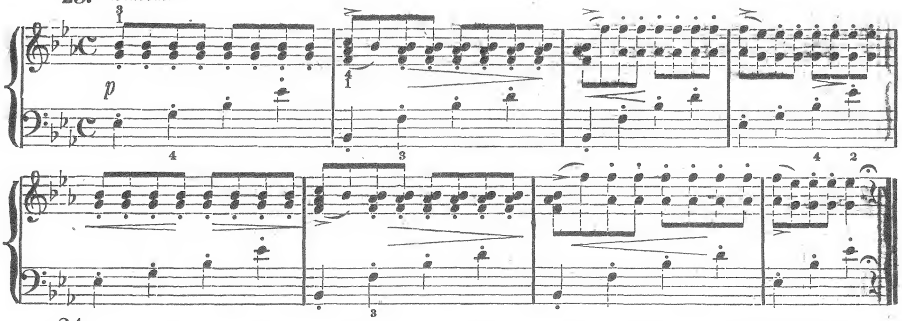
**By the expression "Hineinlegen," Fr. Wieck understands to impress a soft yet full melody into the tones.*



Wieck's Piano-Forte Studies.

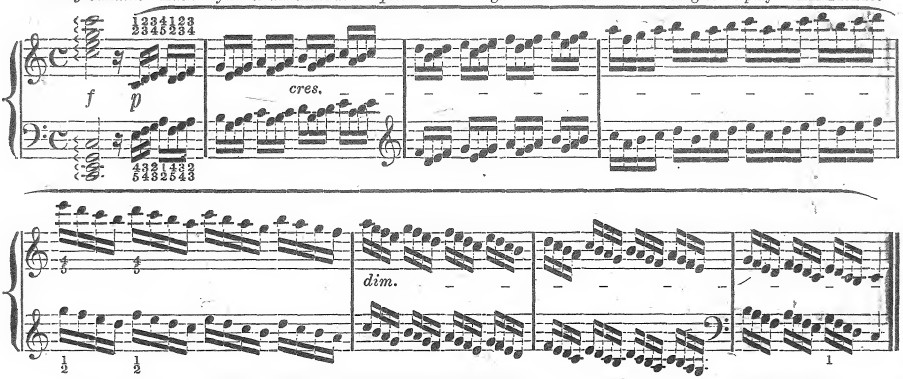
10

23. *Staccato.*



24.

Sehr gebunden. Auch aufwärts diminuendo zu spielen. Legato assai. Also in ascending to be played diminuendo.



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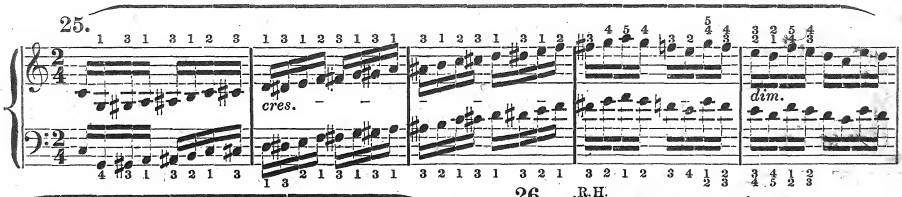

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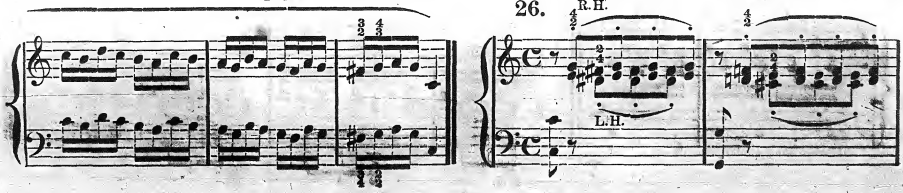

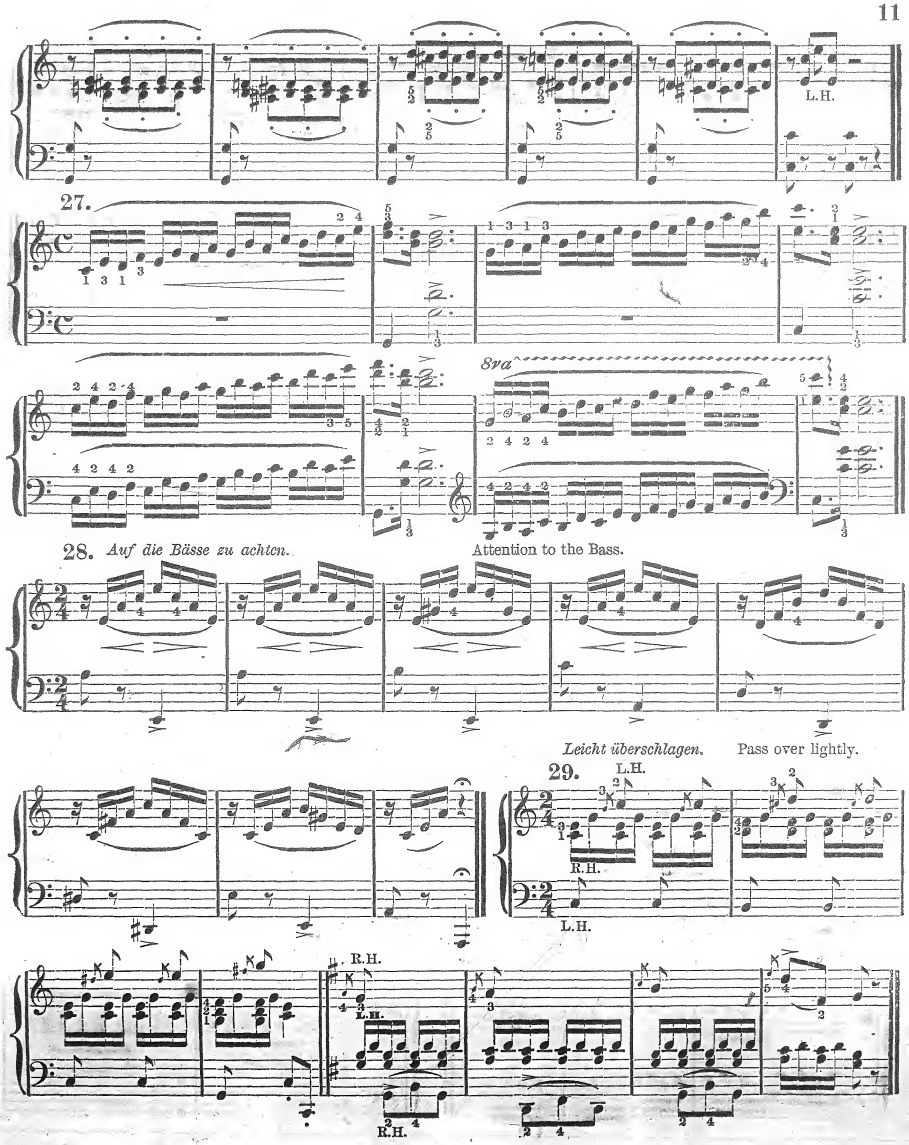
L.H.
27.
8va
28. Auf die Bässe zu achten.
Attention to the Bass.
Leicht überschlagen.
Pass over lightly.
29.
L.H.
R.H.
L.H.
R.H.
L.H.
R.H.

[Continued from page 20.]

with the minor construction. Consequently, they are completely at sea whenever they attempt to render a minor composition; and they stumble blindly through it, making a very unfavorable impression on their unfortunate listeners.

When a performer has not entered thoroughly into the spirit of his piece, and is not completely master of its intricacies, and is not himself pleased with it, how can he expect to awaken an appreciative spirit in his audience? In this connection the most incredible things happen, and it is well to be prepared for the most unexpected questions.

Pupils are certainly excusable, sometimes, when we consider that critics of note, in some of our well-know musical journals, have taken D flat major for the key of a piece, when it was in reality B flat minor. The composition had the signature of five flats, and probably began with the D flat major chord. The first few measures of a piece do not necessarily reveal the key in which it is written, because this frequently does not become manifest until near the close.

19. We are free to acknowledge our total inability to acquire any taste for Czerny's One Hundred Exercises and "School of Velocity," and Diabilli's Five-Finger Exercises. These are, perhaps, in many respects instructive, but they prove far more pernicious in their tendency to corrupt good taste than can be counter-balanced by any merit they possess. On account of their being adapted to the flimsy mechanical action of the piano of that period, they undoubtedly tend to reduce piano playing to an unmeaning, soulless jingle and clatter. Besides, Czerny's method of fingering is no longer practiced throughout, especially since quite an abuse is advocated with regard to the passing over and under—a point which modern methods of fingering endeavor, as far as possible, strictly to guard against.

The literature of the present period, in this department, affords such an abundance of good material for the use of teachers, both in a technical and æsthetic point of view, that the works of these two lamentably prolific authors may be quite properly considered superannuated.

THE ACTION OF THE FIFTH FINGER IN PIANO PLAYING AND THE MEANS OF SECURING A CORRECT POSITION OF HAND, ARM, AND FINGERS.

[Written for The Etude.]

BY CALVIN B. CADY, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN, Ann Arbor, Mich.

With Mr. Hahr's kind permission, I should like to add a few thoughts regarding the important subject of his able, interesting, and suggestive article. *

Such a relation between the fore-arm, wrist and hand as shall most surely and easily give rise to a free, untrammeled use of the muscles concerned in the manipulation of the key-board, is one of the most important relationships, technically, to be established; and yet, as Mr. Hahr justly observes, it is one of the last things thought of. And still another thing is lost sight of, the possibility of a wrong and right process of securing that relationship. All that Mr. Hahr has said is directly to the point. The vertical relationship between the arm, hand, and key-board is desirable for just those reasons which he assigns, and what I have to say refers more particularly to the means for securing the positions desired. But, before passing to that, one advantage gained by this position ought to be particularly mentioned. All teachers have experienced great difficulty in securing the *action of the fifth finger* from the knuckle joint, the same as the other fingers. Nearly all pupils have a tendency to bring into action, simultaneously with the muscles which operate the fifth finger, those muscles which move the *metacarpal* bones of the fifth finger. (The metacarpal bones are those of the palm of the hand.) And thus the *pivot-point* is not the point between the first *phalange* (phalanges are the bones of the fingers) and the *metacarpal* bone—called the knuckle-joint, but the joint formed by the *metacarpal* and one of the small bones (*uneiform*) of the wrist. The whole side of the hand is drawn down in the stroke. The objection is, that while there are muscles for drawing down this *metacarpal* bone, there are no direct muscles for elevating it. This is accomplished in an indirect manner by the elasticity of the ligaments and the use of the extensor muscles (muscles that extend or straighten) of the finger, provided the flexor (opposed to extensor) muscles are set in an opposing manner. But this does not allow of the free play of the flexor and extensor muscles, and causes a stiff, uncontrollable action.

The muscles which draw down the *metacarpal* bone should be mainly used for resistance; that is to keep the pivot-point, which is the knuckle-joint, steady and firm. Hence the study of the student should be the liberation of the finger flexors and extensors from these metacarpal muscles, so that they may have free play, in which case the fingers will move freely from the knuckle joint.

Now the inward drop of the arm, so that it hangs freely from the shoulder, seems to have a tendency to thus liberate the flexor muscles; providing, however, the horizontal position of the hand be at the same time obtained by the use of the proper muscles. This brings us, then, to the main point, the means for securing this relationship between the various means for playing. We have two things to consider, the physiological and mental bases; for in the whole process of technical training these two are inseparable, and must always be considered. The horizontal position of the hand may be obtained in two general ways; first, by throwing out the upper arm, and thus removing the elbow from the body. This is bad, as has been seen, because it seems to act badly upon the flexor muscles, and also because the upper arm, as the most important point of resistance, is thrown into a weak position. This, therefore must be avoided. The second way of righting up the hand is by *rolling* the fore-arm in a plane at right angles to itself. Now, this is accomplished in the first place by the *pronator* (the muscle that turn or roll the palm of the hand downward from the elbow) and *supinator*, (opposed to pronator) muscles, and, secondly, by the assistance of the muscles which flex or extend the hand at the wrist—the flexor and extensor *carpi radialis* and *ulnaris*. The important thing to do here is to roll the arm over toward the body till the hand is brought to a level position, and to do this by means of the *supinator* muscles, eliminating all activity of the hand muscles, so that they are perfectly free to raise or lower the hand. Now, to acquire that concentration of muscular effort necessary to bring to, and maintain the arm, and therefore the hand, in a level position, the mind must discriminate between muscular sensations. When the arm is rolled over by means of the *supinator* muscles alone, the sensation is one thing; when the other muscles are brought in to assist the *supinators*, the sensation is totally different. When once the mind has discriminated between these two differing sensations it can call either to mind, and the action which is in accord with the sensation in mind is sure to follow. In order to know when the hand is level, the eye should not be used, but another sensation be brought in to determine it. This is best done by the feeling of the fingers upon the keys. When the hand has reached a level position the fingers will be felt to touch the keys by the center of the finger, and not by the side. If the objection be made that the fingers are not, or should not, be on the keys, the answer is that this relation between the arm, hand, and key-board, which we are seeking to secure, can best be studied with the fingers lightly touching the keys, and when they are removed from the keys the imagination comes into play and controls the form and position of the hand. My own plan has generally been as follows:

1. Drop the whole arm loosely to the side.
2. Raise the fore-arm till slightly above the key-board, but maintain the same loose feeling in the upper arm.
3. Drop the hand carelessly, and with perfect abandonment of all the muscles of the hand and fingers, upon the key-board, letting the fingers out, using Chopin's positions of the hand and fingers on the tones E, F sharp, G sharp, A sharp and B, for right hand, and similarly for the left hand.

This gives a feeling of repose to both hand and fore-arm, which the student keeps in mind while he rolls the fore-arm inward till the center of the fingers are felt to touch the key. If any constrictions of the hand or finger muscles is felt, the arm must be relaxed, and this relaxed sensation consciously realized and the process above-described repeated. The constrictions of the hand and finger muscles will be manifested by a stiff wrist and rigidly set fingers.

There is one more important point. When the hand has been brought to a level, usually the fifth finger still feels over on the outer edge. Here comes the great struggle to bring the little finger into a perpendicular without twisting the other fingers out of plumb. Here, too, physical sensation steps in to help. In securing the perpendicular position of the fifth finger, whether out straight or curved, the eye should have nothing to do with it. While keeping the same feeling in the other fingers—that is, perfectly quiet and the center of the finger touching the key—feel the fifth finger roll over so that the *inner*, and not the outer, edge of the finger is felt to rest on the key. This perpendicular position of the little finger, in connection with the horizontal hand and vertical arm, results in a free play of the fifth finger from the knuckle-joint.

The place of muscular and general physical sensation, technical development, I hope to discuss in a future paper. It would prolong this article too greatly to enter upon it now.

[* November's ('83) issue of THE ETUDE.—ED.]

All expression consists in shadings, and monotony must, above all things, be avoided. The most general rules are as follows: Rising passages must be played with increasing volume of tone, falling ones with decreasing, so that the highest note is the loudest, the lowest note the softest. By this, music acquires a wavelike motion. The longest note is the loudest; the last notes of songful passages must be played rather more slowly. The melody must be louder than the accompaniment, and the latter must not always participate in the expressive shadings of the former. A frequent change of harmonies, or a rapid succession of modulations, call for a moderation of tempo. All notes foreign to the key, and especially those having an accidental signature, must be more marked. If a note is repeated several times, it must receive varied shadings, by increasing or decreasing the volume of tone. Tied and syncopated notes must be accented. In playing, the keys of the pianoforte must not be handled in a one-sided manner. At times, the hand must caress them, and anon pounce down upon them like a lion seizing his prey. Still, even when getting the utmost possible amount of tone out from the instrument, a clumsy thumping must always be avoided. The ideal in playing is, fire without violence, force without harshness, and softness without weakness.—FRIEDRICH KALKBRENNER, (*Method of the Pianoforte, A. D.* 1820.)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

[Questions pertaining to the study of the Piano-forte will receive attention, and answers appear, usually, in the following month, if received before the FIFTEENTH of the current month. The writer's name must accompany letter to insure an answer.]

M. S.—QUESTION 1.—Please give a course of study for ten terms, for a student of the piano from the very first lesson.

ANSWER.—To give a course of study that would apply for general use is not possible, since pupils differ so much in temperment, ambition, physical and mental endowments, besides the various kinds of talent you find in individual pupils. Some have a natural talent for technic, and delight in overcoming gymnastic difficulties, while their expression and style is dead and undeveloped. We append a course of ten grades, which, while it is not new, contains much that will be found useful in teaching. The pure, technic course can not well be given, but it should follow along and fill up the waste places; theory, also, should not be neglected.

First term, Urbach's Methods or any suitable elementary work.

Second term, the same, with the easiest duets on five tones by Enckhausen op. 72.

Third term, the same, with pieces: In the Meadows, op. 95, Lichner; Wander Song, op. 134, Lichner; On the Heights, Hoffman: first book of Klauser's edition of Schumann's Album, op. 68, arranged in progressive order.

Fourth term, Wieck's studies, with some of the following pieces: Marche, Romaine Gounod; Koehler, op. 249, book 2, Practischer, Lehrgang; Lichner Sonatas op. 66; Diabelli's 4 hand Sonatas op. 163, (any of the seven). For less promising pupils some of the following: Minuet, Don Juan, Schirmer's edition (2 pages); Lurley, Hennings; Little Wanderer; Lange; Zither Player; Lange.

Fifth grade, Felix Le Couppey op. 20; L'Agilite, or Doering op. 8, 1st book; or Koehler, op. 50. Attention should be given to pure technic through all the grades. At this time a pupil should be able to play readily through all the major and minor scales, the various forms of arpeggios, the different modes of striking the keys. Harmony should be commenced. Pieces, suitable to this grade are: The Lark's Morning Song, Koelling; La Tendresse, op. 96, Cramer; Swedish Wedding March, Soderman; Cradle Song, Schumann; Chaconne, Durand; Six Children, pieces by Mendelssohn. For less talented ones, Music Box, Leibich; Swing Song, La Fontaine; La Desire, Cramer; Secret Love, Lange; Zingara Maz Hongroise, Boehm; Marche de Troubadours, Roubier: Wedding March, Schmeizer.

Sixth grade, Beren's New School of Velocity, or Heller op. 45 or 47; Krause's Trill Etudes op. 2, 1st book. Pieces suitable for this grade—Polka, op. 37, Loeschorn; Birds of the Woods, op. 142, Koelling; Polinaise, (from Trio op. 8, Beethoven), Delioux; Dying Poet, Gottschalk; Mendelssohn op. 16, No. 1; Im wunder Schoenen Monat Mai, Merkel; Minuet, from op. 75; Schubert: Gavotte, in D and D minor, Bach; On the Barge, Bendel.

Seventh grade, Etudes de Velocite, Czerny; Burgmueller, op. 105, 1st book; Koehler's Velocity, op. 173. Pieces—Album Leaf, Kirschner; Dance Antique, Mason; Le Serenate, Mosowski; Sonata in D, Haydn; Musical Festival, op. 45, book one, Scharwenka; Nachtstuecke No. 3, Schumann; Andante Varie Pastoral, Mozart; Novellette in B minor, Schumann; Andante, from E flat Concerto. Beethoven; Nocturne, E flat, Chopin; Valse in D flat, Chopin; Polish Dance in E flat minor, Scharwenda.

Eighth grade, Bach's Lighter Compositions, by Fr. Kullak, Czerny, op. 740; Die Kunst der fingerfertigkeit; Heller, op. 46; Pieces—Le Couriers, Ritter; Soiree de Vienne, No. 6, Liszt; Chachouca, Raff; Valse, by Scharwenka, (no opus number); Andante Favori, in F, Beethoven: Fantasie and Sonata, in C minor, Mozart.

Ninth grade, Cramers Etudes, edited by Hans von Buelow, Czerny, op. 337, (Forty Daily Studies); Gradus ad Parnassum; the Tausig edition; Kullak's Octave Studies; Moscheles, op. 70. Pieces—Pollaca, in E major, Weber; Concerto, in D minor, Mozart; Beethoven Sonatas, op. 2, No. 1, op. 10, No. 2, op. 13; Schubert, Sonata in A minor; Mendelssohn, Fantasie op. 28; some of Handel's Suites.

Tenth grade, Czerny's School of Virtuosity, op. 365, four books; Koehler, Special Studies, op. 112; Bach's Well-Tempered Clavichord. Pieces—Rubenstein's Sonata in F, op. 41; Schumann's Carnival, op. 9; Mendelssohn's G minor Concerto; Chopin's B flat minor Caprice. The most of these are classical works; at some future time, if of interest, we will give you a graded list composed entirely of Salon or popular music.

A. B.—QUESTION.—Can you recommend an instruction book for the cabinet organ that is of a high order, and is not filled to overflowing with silly namby-pamby melodies?

ANSWER.—There is no text-book for the organ that I can heartily recommend. There are several written by good musicians, but all are intended to supply the lowest demands. The book you wish is not yet published, nor would it pay to publish it.

C. P.—QUESTION.—Which of the two minor scales is preferable to teach first?

ANSWER.—The harmonic offers the greater advantages. It is more easily remembered, since the ascending movement is similar to the descending; besides, the augmented second between the sixth and seventh degrees is an excellent technical practice. A better idea of the minor mode is gained from this scale than from the melodic, since those tones that rightly belong to the minor scale only appear.

S. A. M.—QUESTION.—Will you please state in THE ETUDE the precise way in which Schumann injured his hand?

ANSWER.—By fastening a string to the ceiling directly over the key-board, and allowing it to reach down to the keys, and by passing his finger through a loop made in the string it was held erect while he exercised the next finger, thinking thereby to gain perfect independence of fingers, and in this way he was lost to the world as a virtuoso; but a richer gain to posterity was the reward of this mishap, for through it he became a creative artist.

PURITY AND IMPURITY.

BY LOUIS KOHLER.

To practice well, is always conscientiously to play correctly and in a good manner.

The bane of playing is impurity, and the word is very significant. It designates, musically speaking, *audible* uncleanliness. Who would purposely muddy a spring or soil a picture? Why, then, trouble the intellectual spring of harmony? As transparent crystal is kept spotless, and as we take pains to secure pure air, so let it be in respect to harmony, the purity of which depends upon correct playing.

Bear in mind, always, the divine origin of harmony, and honor it by continually preserving its purity, through causing it to appear, in its sounding reality, cleanly robed.

At two stages in the study of a piece, it is especially important to heed to the maintenance of purity, viz., at the beginning of practice, say during the first ten or twenty times that one plays it, and then when the period of "freedom" first begins, and the player gives course to feeling and fiery inspiration. Then, above all times, must the secretly active conscience perform in stillness, but with severity, the duties of a critical office.

Be as careful to play cleanly as if every mistake left a black mark upon the face. If this really was the case, oh! how diligently should we wash away every false note by repeatedly playing it purely.

But, are we to be cleanly in corporeal respects only, and not in intellectual?

Let pupils who play over their tasks with indifference, or hurry through it in a trifling manner, reflect upon this matter, and let the results be perceptible in their music lessons.

By means of so-called "accidental" impurities in playing, the chaste sense of hearing first becomes sullied, then confused, and finally (where such accidents perceptibly increase in frequency) accustomed to impurity so as perhaps to hold it to be pure. Further on, the sense becomes steadily more corrupt, and finally abdurate towards truthfulness in the sphere of harmony.

A mistake proceeding from a want of skill, is only a disagreeable accident; but, where mistakes become essential and customary, there art is caricatured.

The conscious, yet uncorrected mistake is always wrong; for a mistake remains a mistake, whether others perceive it or not. A wrong grasp always destroys the animate existence of a spiritual harmonic tone—and even when the act is perceived by no one, having taken place, it may be, in the quiet solitude of the player, truth still lives in the music, and law in the harmony; the printed page is the bill of indictment and the proof lies in the condemning conscience of the player. Let him atone for the wrong on the very spot, at the instant when it occurs, and he will then live in harmony with himself.

In respect to playing with purity, the chief thing is to hear whether one has played wrongly at all, and, if so, where and what the mistake has been. The *whether* and *where* may not be difficult to determine; but the *what* is often difficult to ascertain; because that which is false and incorrect is in most instances contrary to reason, and as such more or less easily escapes not merely the understanding, but sensuous perception as well, according as the false notes may be few or many in number. It is advisable, therefore, instead of looking for wrong notes, to fix the attention exclusively upon the right ones, and to familiarize oneself with the effect which they produce; with a sense of the correct, the conception of the contrary or the incorrect, will logically develop of itself; hence the hearing should never be suffered to slumber while one is playing. Take care that the right is protected in its rights. Cultivate a love of the right, if only for the sake of self-satisfaction.

The Teachers' Column.

Experiences, Suggestions, Trials, Etc.

[Short communications of a didactical nature will be received from Teachers. Only the initials of the writers are printed, without postoffice address.]

A teacher in high standing once said to a pupil this, in substance: "If you do not practice well, I am of no use to you except during your lesson hours; but if you do practice well, you secure my services for an hour or two extra every day."

In instruction, let the teacher adapting himself to the pupil's powers of understanding, frequently discuss the nature of the piece which is being studied, whenever such discussion may appear to the purpose and necessary to a right conception and appreciation. Even in their first pieces, pupils must be incited to discern the beautiful, the powerful, as well as the tender, the gentle and the harsh in music; they must be accustomed consciously to apprehend the character of pieces of music (whenever this is obviously unclear to them) and taught deliberately to express this character in their playing.—L. K.

Many entertain the erroneous opinion that to arrive at excellence it is necessary to practice at least six or seven hours a day, but I can assure them a regular daily and attentive study of at most three hours is sufficient for this purpose. Any practice beyond this damps the spirit, produces a mechanical rather than an expressive and impassioned style of playing, and is generally disadvantageous to the performer, inasmuch as when compelled to lay aside the incessant exercise, if called on to play any piece on a sudden, he cannot regain his usual powers of execution without having some days' previous notice.

Progress in music is a growth, not a sudden springing fount. Do not look back at every step to see how far you have come, but plod steadily onward, and in time you will be surprised to see how far on the road for home you have come.

"There is no excellence without great labor." This is a trite proverb, but especially applicable to the study of music. Because your friends flatter you and say you have genius, do not think that you are above the common herd, and do not need to study to become a musician. Genius is worth but little without a great deal of down-right hard work to push it along. While you are dreaming along, some slow plodder will pass you—remember the hare and the tortoise.

"How many hours a day must I practice?" The manner in which you practice is of infinitely more importance than the amount of time you spend at it daily. Thirty minutes well applied is worth four times that amount merely spent at the instrument listlessly drumming over you lesson, anon digressing into any and every idle fancy that comes into your head. Give your whole attention to your practice, concentrate your mind on what you are doing, if it is only a five finger exercise. Indeed nothing is of much greater importance than the much abhorred five-finger exercise. Practice it to the best of your ability; if it is worth doing at all, it is worth doing well, and if it is not worth doing at all, your teacher would not have told you to do it. Listen to your tones, get them as smooth and even as possible; look to your fingering, your position, you will find enough details to demand all your attention.—F. R. W.

I have been reading the "Teacher's Column" with much relish, and, if not too presuming, I would like to ask some of the teachers who read this column to favor me with their experience with pupils who have inherently crude natures, but with all a decided talent for music. With this class I find great difficulty in refining and educating their taste for the better class of music. I have worked on the plan that their whole nature must be changed. I want to know if it is possible to refine our musical nature without effecting our general nature, and visa versa?—L. A. P.

Much of the trouble that teachers find with music that is fingered after a different mode than they are accustomed to use, may be avoided by simply changing the fingering with a lead pencil. A piece of four pages can be transferred from foreign to English mode, or visa versa, in a very few minutes, and with much less trouble than one would imagine.

ROBERT SCHUMANN'S RULES FOR YOUNG MUSICIANS.

II.

36. For recreation from your musical studies, read the poets frequently. Walk also in the open air.

37. Much may be learned from singers, male and female; but do not believe in them for everything.

38. Behind the mountains there live people, too. Be modest; as yet you have discovered and thought nothing which others have not thought and discovered before you. And even if you have done so, regard it as a gift from above, which you have got to share with others.

39. The study of the history of music, supported by the actual hearing of the master compositions of the different epochs, is the shortest way to cure you of self-esteem and vanity.

40. A fine book on music is Thibaut Ueber Reinheit der Tonkunst, ("On Purity in the Musical Art.") Read it often as you grow older.

41. If you pass a church and hear the organ playing, go in and listen. If it happens that you have to occupy the organist's seat yourself, try your little fingers, and be amazed before this omnipotence of music.

42. Improve every opportunity of practicing upon the organ; there is no instrument which takes such speedy revenge on the impure and slovenly in composition, or in playing, as the organ.

43. Sing frequently in choruses, especially on the middle parts. This makes you musical.

44. What is it to be musical? You are not so if, with eyes fastened anxiously upon the notes, you play a piece through painfully to the end. You are not so if, when some one turns over two pages at once, you stick and cannot go on. But you are musical if, in a new piece, you anticipate pretty nearly what is coming, and in an old piece know it by heart; in a word, if you have music, not in your fingers only, but in your head and heart.

45. But how does one become musical? Dear child, the main thing, a sharp ear, and a quick power of comprehension, comes, as in all things, from above. But the talent may be improved and elevated. You will become so, not by shutting yourself up all day like a hermit, practicing mechanical studies, but by living, many-sided musical intercourse; and especially by constant familiarity with orchestra and chorus.

46. Acquire in season a clear notion of the compass of the human voice in its four principal classes; listen to it particularly in the chorus; ascertain in what interval its highest power lies, and in what other intervals it is best adapted to the expression of what is soft and tender.

47. Listen attentively to all songs of the people; they are a mine of the most beautiful melodies, and open for you glimpses into the character of different nations.

48. Exercise yourself early in reading music in the old clefs. Otherwise, many treasures of the past will remain locked against you.

49. Reflect early on the tone and character of different instruments; try to impress the peculiar coloring of each upon your ear.

50. Do not neglect to hear good operas.

51. Reverence the old, but meet the new also with a warm heart. Cherish no prejudice against names unknown to you.

52. Do not judge of a composition on a first hearing; what pleases you in the first moment is not always the best. Masters would be studied. Much will become clear to you for the first time in your old age.

53. In judging of compositions, dintinguish whether they belong to the artistic category, or only aim at dilettantish entertaiment. Stand up for those of the first sort but do not worry yourself about the others!

54. "Melody" is the watchword of the dilettanti, and certainly there is no music without melody. But understand well what they mean by it; nothing passes for a melody with them but one that is easily comprehended or rhythmically pleasing. But there are other melodies of a different stamp; open a volume of Bach, Mozart, or Beethoven, and you see them in a thousand various styles. It is to be hoped that you will soon be weary of the poverty and monotony of the modern Italian opera melodies.

55. If you can find out little melodies for yourself on the piano, it is all very well. But if they come of themselves, when you are not at the piano, then you have still greater reason to rejoice, for then the inner sense of music is astir in you. The fingers must make what the head wills, not vice versa.

56. If you begin to compose, make it all in your head. When you have got a piece all ready, then try it on the instrument. If your music came from your inmost soul, if you have felt it, then it will take effect on others.

57. If heaven has bestewed on you a lively imagination, you will often sit in solitary hours spell-bound to your piano, seeking expression for your inmost soul in harmonies; and all the more mysteriously will you be drawn into magic circles, as it were, the more unclear the realm of harmony as yet may be to you. The happiest hours of youth are these. Beware, however, of abandoning yourself too often to a talent which may tempt you to waste power and time on phantoms. Mastery of form, the power of clearly moulding you productions, you will only gain through the sure token of writing. Write, then, more than you improvise.

58. Acquire an early knowledge of directing; watch good directors closely; and form a habit of directing with them, silently, and to yourself. This brings clearness into you.

59. Look about you well in life, as also in the other arts and sciences.

60. The moral laws are also those of art.

61. By industry and perseverance you will always carry it higher.

62. From a pound of iron, bought for a few pence, many thousand watch-springs may be made, whereby the value is increased a hundred thousand fold. The pound which God has given you, improve it faithfully.

63. Without enthusiasm nothing real comes of art.

64. Art is not for the end of getting riches. Only become a greater and greater artist; the rest will come of itself.

65. Only when the form is entirely clear to you will the spirit become clear.

66. Perhaps only genius understands genius fully.

67. Some one maintained that a perfect musician must be able, on the first hearing of a complicated orchestral work, to see it as in bodily score before him. That is the highest that can be conceived of.

67. There is no end of learning.

THOUGHTS ON PIANO PLAYING.

By FREDERICK WIECK.

The age of progress announces, in piano-playing also, "a higher beauty" than has hitherto existed. Now, I demand of all the defenders of this new style, wherein is this superior beauty supposed to consist? It is useless to talk, in a vague way, about a beauty which no one can explain. I have listened to the playing—no, the thrumming and stamping—of many of these champions of the modern style of beauty; and I have come to the conclusion, according to my way of reasoning, that it ought to be called a higher, —quite different, inverted beauty,—a deformed beauty, repugnant to the sensibilities of all mankind. But our gifted "age of the future" protests against such cold conservatism. The period of piano fury which I have lived to see, and which I have just described, was the introduction to this new essay, only a feeble attempt, and a preliminary to this piano future. Should this senseless raging and storming upon the piano, where not one idea can be intelligently expressed in a half-hour, this abhorrent and rude treatment of a grand concert piano, combined with frightful misuse of both pedals, which puts the hearer into agonies of horror and spasms of terror, ever be regarded as anything but a return to barbarism, devoid of feeling and reason? This is to be called music! music of the future! the beauty of the future style! Truly, for this style of music, the ears must be differently constructed, the feelings must be differenntly constituted, and a different nervous system must be created! For this again we shall need surgeons, who lie in wait in the background with the throat improvers. What a new and grand field of operations has open to them! Our age produces monsters, who are insensible to the plainest truths, and who fill humanity with horror. Political excese have hardly ceased, when still greater ones must be repeated in the world of music. But comfort yourselves, my readers: these isolated instances of madness, these last convulsions of musical insanity, with however much arrogance they may be proclaimed, will not take the world by storm. The time will come when no audience, not even eager possessors of complimentary tickets, but only a few needy hirelings, will venture to endure such concert performances of "the future."

The tones which are produced with a loose wrist are always more tender and more attractive, have a fuller sound, and permit more delicate shading than the sharp tones, without body, which are thrown or fired off or tapped out with unendurable rigidity by the aid of the arm and forearm. A superior technique can with few exceptions be more quickly and favorably acquired in this way than when the elbows are required to contribute their power. I do not, however, censure the performance of many *virtuosos*, who execute rapid octave passages with a stiff wrist; they often do it with great precision, in the most rapid *tempo*, forcibly and effectively. It must, after all, depend upon individual peculiaritries whether the pupil can learn better and more quickly to play such passages thus or with a loose wrist. The present style of bravoura playing for *virtuosos* cannot dispense with facility in octave passages; it is a necessary part of it.

I will now consider the use of loose and independent fingers, in playing generally; *i. e.*, in that of more advanced pupils who have already acquired the necessary elementary knowledge. The fingers must be set upon the keys with a certain decision, firmness, quickness, and vigor, and must obtain a command over the key-board; otherwise, the result is only a tame, colorless, uncertain, immature style of playing, in which no fine *portamento*, no poignant *staccato*, or sprightly accentuation can be produced. Every thoughtful teacher, striving for the best result, must, however, take care that this shall only be acquired gradually, and must teach it with a constant regard to individual peculiarities, and not at the expense of beauty of performance, and of a tender, agreeable touch.

"Expression cannot be taught, it must come of itself." But when are we to look for it? When the stiff fingers are fifty or sixty years old, and the expression is imprisoned in them, so that nothing is ever to be heard of it? This is a wide-spread delusion. Let us look at a few of those to whom expression has come of itself. X. plays skillfully and correctly, but his expression continues crude, cold, monotonous; he shows too pedantic a solicitude about mechanical execution and strict time; he never ventures on a *pp.*, uses too little shading in *piano*, and plays the *forte* too heavily, and without regard to the instrument; his *cresendi* and *diminuendi* are inappropriate, often coarse and brought in at unsuitable places; and—his *ritardandi!* they are tedious indeed! "But Miss Z. plays differently and more finely." Truly, she plays differently; but is it more finely? Do you like this gentle violet blue, this sickly paleness, these rouged falsehoods, at the expense of all integrity of character? this sweet, embellished, languishing style, this *rubato* and dismembering of the musical phrases, this want of time, and this sentimental trash? They both have talent, but their expression was allowed to be developed of itself. They both would have been very good players; but now they have lost all taste for the ideal, which manifests itself in the domain of truth, beauty and simplicity. If pupils are left to themselves, they imitate the improper and erroneous easily and skilfully; the right and suitable with difficulty, and certainly unskilfully. Even the little fellow who can hardly speak learns to use naughty, abusive words more quickly and easily than fine, noble expressions. What schoolmaster has not been surprised at this facility, and what good old aunt has not laughed at it? But you say, "It is not right to force the feelings of others!" That is quite unnecessary; but it is possible to arouse the feelings of others, to guide and educate them, without prejudicing their individuality of feeling, and without restraining or disturbing them, unless they are on the wrong path. Who has not listened to performers and singers who were otherwise musical, but whose sentiment was either ridiculous or lamentable?

THE FOURTH FINGER OF THE LEFT HAND.

By ALOYS BIDEZ, LL. D.

[Written expressly for THE ETUDE.]

Every piano teacher has been struck by the small number of amateurs who use the fourth finger of the left hand otherwise than in scale-like runs, where its use is unavoidable; everywhere else the third finger is substituted for it.

Without any intention to speak *ex cathedra*, I should like to propose a few rules on the subject, because I have found them easy of application and they may be useful to others.

1. The cases where the third is substituted for the fourth, are either in chords struck at once, *plaques*, as the French term it, or in arpeggios. If the note below the one struck with the second finger is at a minor-third from it, and one or both being black keys; also if the note immediately above the lowest one is at a fourth from it—in these two cases the third finger is legitimately used, but in all others the fourth is the only right finger.

We believe this rule to be without exceptions.

As an accessory to this point we may mention the interesting case where the chord, in its complete form, is a true four-note chord, one note of which is left out. Of course, if they were all present, both the third and fourth fingers should be used, but the bearing out of the notes may bring the matter again in question. We believe in fingering as if all four of the notes were used, and in leaving unemployed the finger which should have struck the note left out. If, however, the second finger is to remain thus unemployed, it is generally better to substitute it for the third, and then decide between the third and fourth according to the general rule above.

2. The case where the fifth is substituted for the fourth is that of chords of three notes. If such a chord is written within a sixth, (or a seventh, for large hands), and more especially if it follows an octave or a distant bass note, the fourth must be used, unless followed immediately in a quick movement, by a larger chord, requiring the use of the fifth, when the latter may also be used on the smaller chord.

I would close by saying to amateurs, wherever there is doubt use the fourth; and to my fellow-teachers, finger your pupils' pieces so that the use of the fourth recurs as often as is practicable.

With a thumb that passes under without a jerk, a fourth ever ready to pass over it, or to trill with the third, and a fifth that can *sing* well, what fine playing is already to be done!

CHARLOTTE, N. C.